

New York shows us that we need to be serious. That means giving our State and local officials the tools they need to follow the money.

This appropriation will be used to stop those who bring drugs into our neighborhoods and into our kids' lives. Together with the national anti-money laundering strategy, which will soon be released, we are sending a strong message that the free ride is over.

Mr. KOLBE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, let me just, if I might, respond to a few of the comments that were made by the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN).

□ 1530

Let me say that I have the greatest respect for the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN). He has been the conscience of this House, he has been a fiscal hawk, and he has forced those of us on the appropriations committees, and all the committees, to answer questions in a way that I think we need to have answers, not only to our colleagues but to the American people.

So I salute him for the work that he has done and I appreciate it. It may not have always have made my days easier, but it is okay. I think it makes for a better bill in the long-run.

But if I might, let me just talk about a couple of things that he mentioned. He talked about the fact that this is \$240 million over last year. In my opening remarks, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN) was not on the floor at that time, but I noted that that \$240 million, which is less than a 2 percent increase over the current year, is considerably short of what we would need—\$600 million—to maintain current levels. That is just to keep the current operations going.

Now, one can argue that we ought to make it more efficient, that we ought to be more productive, and that there ought to be ways to make Government do better with less. And I do not disagree with that. I think through the years, for example in the IRS, we have done that very substantially. We have brought the number of employees down in IRS by 20,000. We have brought the amount of money that we have spent in IRS substantially. We do have a much more efficient Internal Revenue Service.

But it, nonetheless, gives us a benchmark I think for where we can compare things. And clearly, the amount of money needed to make all the services that were in our bill last year stay just the same, keep on automatic pilot, would be \$600 million. We are only taking \$240 million over that from last year.

In just two accounts, IRS tax processing, for example, it would take \$118 million more to maintain current levels. In tax law enforcement, it would take \$137 million to maintain current levels. Those two accounts alone, and those are just two accounts of IRS, which is just one very large part of our

entire bill, those two accounts alone require more than we are giving this bill just to maintain current services.

So it is clear we are not even maintaining current services with the proposed spending increases. We are doing it frankly by cutting out spending in other areas, and a lot of that comes in courthouse spending that we are not able to do this year.

So I would just make that note that I believe that we do need to have these additional resources if we are to have efficiencies in the Internal Revenue Service.

All of us on this floor, I believe all of us that are here at this moment, and I believe my colleague from Oklahoma, voted for the IRS modernization legislation, which requires much more consumer friendly, much more customer orientation on the part of the Internal Revenue Service. That costs money. We have shifted a lot of people over from IRS tax law enforcement to customer service. It requires more money and more time in order to do that.

That is one of the things that we did not do when we passed the bill on this floor in July. We were not able to give all the money we needed for the new initiatives that this body has authorized for the Internal Revenue Service. We attempted to do that with the money that has been restored in the conference committee. So I think it is reasonable.

I also think that this subcommittee has been very diligent in going after agencies to make sure that we are spending every dollar as wisely as possible.

Does that mean we cannot do more? No. We can do more. Does that mean we can do better? Yes, we can do better. The agencies can do better and the Office of Management and Budget can help us with that as they prepare the request for this next year. But I think this bill will stand the test of time.

Let me also just finally mention the issue of pay increases for Federal workers. The gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN) said that he thought it was not fair that Federal employees were getting more than retirees were getting into their annual adjustment. We all know the difficulty that that poses for us from a fairness standpoint or from a political standpoint. But we also know that those two items are based on very different kinds of adjustments.

One for workers, as the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) has pointed out, is based on an employment index, that has to do with what is the comparable pay on the outside for workers.

We are in a very tight labor market. Labor costs have been going up fairly dramatically in the last couple of years. Fortunately, inflation has not been going up as rapidly. So we find ourselves with this anomaly, and it is an anomaly based on historic conditions, where inflation remains very low, but thanks to productivity gains

and other gains, we have been able to increase real wages more rapidly in the last couple of years.

Now, this was true last year. The difference was not as great, but it was true last year as well.

Many of us can remember going back 15, 16, 17 years ago to the early 1980s when Social Security recipients and Federal retirees were getting 12 and 13 percent COLA adjustments, while Federal workers were getting 3 and 4 percent pay increases. The difference was much more dramatic going the other direction.

So I would just say that these are based on two different indexes and we ought not to start to mix apples with oranges on that issue.

Finally, let me just say on the issue of the pay increase, the fact that this legislation mandates a 4.8 instead of the 4.4 percent that had been requested by the President.

The Members will remember that earlier this year we gave that larger increase to the military because it was felt that we needed to do that in order to try to catch up. There was a sense that the same kind of fairness needed to be given to civilian employees. And so, in the bill that was adopted here on the floor of the House of Representatives, we included a provision, a sense of Congress provision, that Federal civilian employees should get the same 4.8 percent increase.

Subsequently, after the President announced that he was going to agree to a 4.8 percent adjustment, we decided to write it into the bill. That is why we have a 4.8 percent increase in our legislation.

So I would just want to make those points at this time.

I respect what the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN) has suggested to us, but I think this bill does stand any test and I think it can be fully justified.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN).

Mr. COBURN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, I value the Federal employees that work in my district. This is not about any individual employee. But the average Federal employee's salary in this country is greater than the average salary in this country by \$4,000.

So they may be unlike comparisons, but there is an unfairness inherently when the average American makes \$4,000 more than the average Federal employee. That is number one.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, if my friend will yield for a question on that point, I ask him, how much does the average doctor make above the average salary?

Mr. COBURN. Probably significant. I do not know what the average doctor's salary is. But I also know that the average doctor has 8 years additional education and debt that the average